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Marshals deputed to guard Bellandur Lake, report violations

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BENGALURU: To prevent dumping of garbage, construction debris and sewage in the heavily polluted Bellandur Lake, BBMP has deployed marshals along strategic spots.

Eighteen marshals and two Prahari vigilance vehicles are now keeping a watch on the 900-acre lake, which has seen fires caused by pollution and toxic foam.

BBMP has selected the marshals from the Karnataka Ex-Servicemen Welfare Society. "We are monitoring the waterbody round the clock. Incidents of garbage dumping and lake encroachment will be reported to BBMP and police," said G Basavaraju, head marshal. He said they will share pictures of the violators with BBMP and police officials via a

WhatsApp group.

On Thursday, home minister Ramalinga Reddy and Bengaluru development minister K J George inspected the lake and evaluated the progress of rejuvenation work.

Monitoring through CCTV cams

George said: “We will instal additional CCTV cameras around the lake and have set up a centralized control room to monitor CCTV footage on a real-time basis.”

“Real-time tracking will prevent instances of miscreants setting the grass on fire,” he said. The government has been maintaining that the mega fire that broke out on the lakebed a few weeks ago was due to miscreants setting the dry grass afire.

The BDA has entrusted deweeding of the lake to Hyderabad-based firm Harvins Constructions Private Limited. It has deployed machines like weed harvester, floating pontoon excavator and long boon excavator to clear the lake of weeds and silt.

George said they are also planning automatic sluice gates to prevent frothing of Bellandur and Varthur lakes. “We are in talks with an Israel-based firm for rejuvenation of the lakes.

Odette Katrak, resident and activist, said: “I spoke to the Prahari head and residents are very hopeful as now we have a number to share our complaints on dumping and burning of waste. The move will definitely be a deterrent, but it remains to be seen whether the government will take action by levying hefty fines or will it just be another channel to report violations. Will Praharis be empowered to fine or is it just a poll gimmick?”

Water sports on the cards

George said the government is planning to introduce water sports in Bellandur and Varthur lakes. “The rejuvenation will be completed by 2020. Our government will return to power and introduce water sports in these waterbodies,” he said. Boating and kayaking are also likely to be introduced if all goes according to plan.

